

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP IT (KISSINGER, HENRY A. VISIT TO ROME)

SUBJ: MEDIA IMPACT FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER'S ROME VISIT

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SUMMARY: SECRETARY'S ROME VISIT RECEIVED MAJOR PLAY ALL MEDIA. OVERWHELMINGLY FAVORABLE COMMENT CREDITING KISSINGER WITH SUCCESS IN MIDEAST, PURSUING DETENTE, AND RETURNING RELATIONS WITH EUROPEAN ALLIES TO POSITIVE TRACK INDICATES SUBSTANTIVE IMPACT OF VISIT. END SUMMARY.

1. SECRETARY KISSINGER'S 22-HOUR VISIT TO ROME WAS TREATED BY MEDIA AS MAJOR EVENT OF SIGNIFICANT IMPORT TO ITALY. ALL NEWSPAPERS EXCEPT COMMUNIST /L'UNITA'/ FRONTPAGED COVERAGE OF SECRETARY'S MEETINGS WITH GOI LEADERS AND POPE, SECOND ONLY TO NEWS OF GOI'S PROMULGATION OF NEW AUSTERITY MEASURES. SECRETARY'S INTERVIEW WITH RAI-TV (TEXT SENT REFTEL 9339) FEATURED IN SATURDAY EVENING TELECAST SEEN BY ESTIMATED 18 MILLION VIEWERS. ALSO COVERED PROMINENTLY IN SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF VISIT TO ITALY WAS SECRETARY'S REASSURANCE THAT HELP WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FROM US AND ALLIES IF ITALY NEEDED IT. HOWEVER, CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRAT ORGAN /IL POPOLO/, LEFTIST /IL MESSAGGERO/ AND PRO-COMMUNIST /PAESE SERA/ OVERPLAYED ECONOMIC TALKS BY IMPLYING THAT SPECIFIC AID MEASURES TO ITALY WERE

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DISCUSSED.

3. MEDIA ALSO STRESSED "IRREVERSIBILITY" OF DETENTE AS RESULT MOSCOW SUMMIT AND DESPITE REPORTED FAILURE TO ACHIEVE BASIC BREAKTHROUGH. ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT WAS THEME OF REVIVED US-WESTERN EUROPE RELATIONSHIP WHICH ATTRIBUTABLE ENTIRELY TO SECRETARY'S EFFORTS. INFLUENTIAL LEFT-OF-CENTER /LA STAMPA/ HEADLINED: "KISSINGER IN ROME: REVIVAL OF ITALY AND EEC," AND ADDED "THE MOST VIVID IMPRESSION ONE CAN GATHER FROM KISSINGER'S VISIT TO ROME IS THAT THE COMING MONTHS MAY LEAD TO ITALY'S REVIVAL AND EEC'S LAUNCHING." RAI-TV FOREIGN NEWS ANALYST SAID "RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND THE OLD CONTINENT WERE TENSE FOR SOME TIME...BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT ATMOSPHERE OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND ITS WESTERN ALLIES IS IMPROVING." THIS THEME ECHOED IN SEVERAL MAJOR DAILIES.

4. /COMMENT/: ALTHOUGH NO NEGOTIATIONS TOOK PLACE NOR STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENTS EMERGED, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT VISIT WAS REGARDED AS SUBSTANTIVE AND FRUITFUL BY MEDIA. ONE NEED ONLY CONTRAST EDITORIAL COMMENT OF FEW MONTHS AGO WHEN GOOM FOR ITALY, STYMIED PROGRESS OF EEC, ALLIED SQUABBLING, AND "DISARRAY" OF NATO WERE OVERWHELMING THEMES. NO ONE THINKS THAT BASIC PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN SOLVED, BUT SWITCH FROM NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE TONE DIRECTLY TRACEABLE TO SECRETARY'S ACTIVITIES AND VISIT HERE. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL IMPACT INDICATED BY OTIMISTIC MEDIA COVERAGE INDICATES VISIT MUCH MORE THAN COSMETIC FOR ITALIANS AND HAD SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS.VOLPE

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